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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000582

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER STRATAN

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Classified by Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry under
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: In a July 27 meeting with Ambassador Chaudhry, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Andrei Stratan promised, without much certainty or enthusiasm, that he would fix the problems created when the Government of Moldova (GOM) refused accreditation to the majority of European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) observers. End summary.

Minister of Foreign Affairs not in ENEMO Clearance Loop

12. (C) Told that the Central Election Commission (CEC) had accredited only 53 of the 140 observers whose accreditation was requested by ENEMO, and asked what the GOM had against the 87 who had been rejected, Stratan expressed surprise that there were problems. Told that even the ENEMO Head of Mission, a Ukrainian, had been refused accreditation, Stratan asked the Ambassador what he had heard from the CEC about the clearance process. The Ambassador replied that the CEC had noted that clearances were required from the MFA, the Ministry of Interior and the intelligence service (SIS), and asked Stratan what his objections from his ministry were. Stratan admitted that he had not seen the materials, and shifted responsibility to other two GOM bodies.

13. (C) Stratan admitted that the accreditation problem was creating yet another bad impression of Moldova, especially since the ENEMO invitation was made by the Embassy at the personal request of President Voronin. He expressed further surprise when told that 17 of the 53 accredited ENEMO observers, coming from countries without Moldovan embassies or consulates, had requested airport visas last week, but had heard nothing from the MFA. Stratan noted that he had earlier authorized airport visas for a visiting football team and had "got in trouble" for his actions. Stratan interrupted the meeting to telephone the head of the CEC, but was told that he was in a meeting. Pressed on the urgency of accreditation and airport visas (polling booths will open 43 hours after today's meeting), Stratan said that he would raise the issue with his superiors.

14. (C) Dressed in slacks and a short-sleeved

shirt, Stratan explained that he was about to leave for Rezina. Not to campaign, he promised the Ambassador, but to solve a water-supply problem in the north. Because no press or public would be present, and because the project was vital to four districts, Stratan explained, the activity would not constitute political campaigning.

15. (C) Just as the meeting was ending, we received a report from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) that a team of 11 ENEMO observers, all Georgian citizens who were not yet accredited), were being held at Chisinau Airport by Customs police, despite the fact that CIS nationals do not need visas to enter Moldova, and despite the fact that the delegation had an invitation letter from the CEC. According to NDI, the Customs Police said that they also needed a telephone call from the CEC. We later heard that the Georgian Consul and a lawyer hired by ENEMO went to the airport to assist. Both were told that the Georgians might be sent back to their country.

Comment:

16. (C) Stratan was sure of himself regarding the campaign--sure that he was not involved in it, and sure that Lupu and the Party of Communists would be able to consolidate their forces in the next Parliament, despite current conflicts between Lupu and Voronin. On the issue of his ministry's ability to influence events within the competence of the ministry, he expressed only promises to

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look into things. While the Embassy has been attempting to hold the GOM's feet to the fire on democratization issues connected with upcoming elections, it appears that there are no feet left, after the GOM shot them off.

CHAUDHRY